Emily Evans

From: International Longevity Centre <events@ilcuk.org.uk>
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To: Emily Evans
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International Longevity Centre UK

Latest news

ILC Friday three

- Reason for optimism - when remarkable glass-ceiling firsts go unremarked
- Longevity and climate change - ageing well in a warming world
- Retail therapy - better support when we're vulnerable

Reason for optimism - remarkable glass-ceiling firsts go unremarked



The much-anticipated Budget announcement was, of course, the big news story in the UK this week. There has been extensive media coverage and a mixed reaction to the first Budget from a Labour Government in 14 years: the International Monetary

Fund (IMF) welcomed the measures, the market jittered slightly, and some media commentators described it as a throwback to the tax-and-spend Labour Party of the 1970s, "squeezing the rich until the pips squeak."

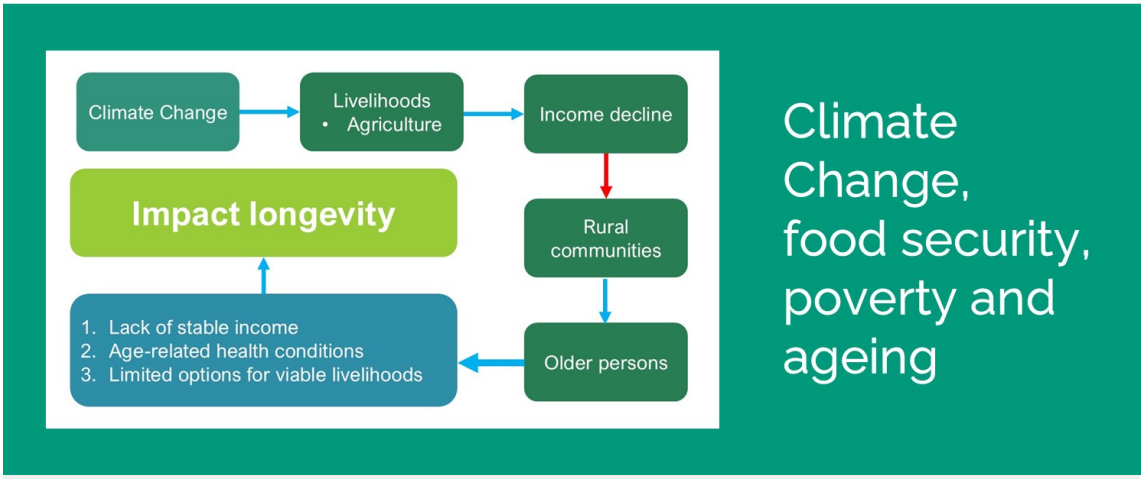
Rachel Reeves' first Budget raises taxes by more than expected, borrows more than expected, and imposes higher taxes on employers than forecast. ILC's route map for long lives said there was *"a trade-off between short-term pain and long-term gain"* and that, for too long, *"politicians of all parties had avoided levelling with the public about these trade-offs."* Our route map acknowledged that *"we may need to pay more into the state's pot to ensure that we address longstanding inequalities and to insure each other against the risks associated with long lives."*

Policy-wise, there were several things to welcome in Rachel Reeves' long and comprehensive speech, such as the increase in Carers' Allowance, the opportunity of the Get Britain Working White Paper and the promised investment in health and education. We wanted the Government to be both brave and bold, and in that sense, Rachel Reeves has delivered. But like many, we have a few concerns about what the unintended consequences might be. For example, might the increased tax burden on employers disincentivise the recruitment of people of all ages? What might the impact be on not-for-profit organisations? Do the warm words around prevention and a shift from hospital to community really mean a greater proportion of NHS funding for public health and primary care?

Given these cautions, it wasn't the Budget statement that gave us a reason for optimism this week. It was, instead, Rishi Sunak's reflections at his last Prime Minister's Questions as he steps down as the UK's Opposition Leader, marking the end of his significant role as he began – with Diwali celebrations. Sunak expressed pride in leading a diverse and (largely) inclusive country, saying that what he was most proud of was that his becoming the first British Asian Prime Minister *"was just not that big a deal."* And while one male political sketch writer referenced Rachel Reeves' *"swishing bob"*, stating that the red Budget box had *"clearly always been a natty little clutch bag"*, the focus of most of the commentariat was on the content of the first-ever female Chancellor's speech, and not on what she was wearing. Progress, of sorts.

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Longevity and climate change - ageing well in a warming world



There are some enduring problems facing our societies that require sustained action from governments, yet a cohesive, long-term response to tackle them is currently missing. Longevity is clearly our priority at the ILC; a lack of understanding and political will constrains our ability to adapt our societies to longer lives and unlock the opportunities they present.

Perhaps the quintessential example of short-termism in policymaking, however, is climate change. Scientific consensus on the need for action and the increasing incidence of extreme weather events around the world make it clear that transformative change is required from all of us. Yet too often, we see governments and industries tinkering around the edges – nowhere near what is needed to tackle the "climate cataclysm looming; we are underprepared for what this could mean", as the UN puts it.

As many readers will know, ILC UK is one of 16 ILCs around the world – together we are the ILC Global Alliance, a multinational consortium of organisations working on various aspects of longevity. The ILC Global Alliance Climate Change Committee was set up to align climate and longevity activists on their mutual objectives and common goals. It is co-chaired by ILC UK's Head of Programmes and Partnerships, Paul Goulden, and Senior Health Policy Lead, Esther McNamara. More people living for more years inevitably puts more pressure on our planetary resources. As we see it, both climate and longevity stakeholders have an interest in collaborating and advocating together to build a world that is more sustainable and supports us to live better for longer.

Last week, the Climate Change Committee hosted a webinar to outline the necessity of taking decisive action on both demographic change and the climate crisis. These two global issues are interlinked, and we cannot meaningfully discuss one without the other. The Committee brought together expert speakers from around the world to share their insights on the need to bring climate and longevity together in the minds of decision-makers. They also shared their expertise on specific topics, providing evidence that can inspire action and policy change on these two phenomena.

- Professor Karl Pillemer, Gerontologist, Cornell University – *Beyond victims: older people and climate change activism*
- Dr Mayeso Chinseu Lazaro, Educator and Researcher, University of Malawi – *Climate change, food security, poverty, and ageing in malawi*
- Nicola Torley, Longevity Consultant, Hymans Robertson – *The role of industry, financial services, and pensions in our collective response*
- Dr Anandita Pattnaik, Policy Officer, UK Health Alliance on Climate Change – *Planetary health and public health: policy and practice*

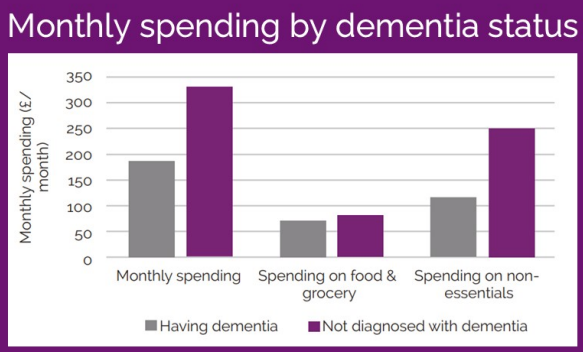
ILC-UK also shared evidence from our Global Healthy Ageing and Prevention Index on the relationship between environmental performance and healthy ageing around the world.

The ILC Global Alliance Climate Change Committee and ILC UK aim to move this forward. We are keen to build further networks, evidence, and opportunities for a coordinated policy approach to both climate and longevity that will inspire action. We have made the case for a joint approach to longevity and climate; next, we need to take the debate to decision-makers and advocate for a changed policy approach.

To get involved, please don't hesitate to reach out to Committee co-chairs Paul and Esther. And you can watch the webinar on YouTube via the button below.

WATCH HERE

Retail therapy - how we can be better supported when vulnerable



Consumer spending could see a boost of £948 million each year if our spending environments were more welcoming.

Today, scams and computer fraud remain the most common crimes in the UK, and the issue continues to have a huge economic and social cost. Guidance, advice, and a financially literate population are all useful tools to help consumers navigate money, but what more can we do to ensure customers understand their options?

With the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) review on how firms are responding to the needs of customers in vulnerable circumstances due later in the year, we thought it would be a useful time to have a conversation about "what next." So, this week, we held one of our occasional "Deliveroo dinners," bringing together experts and policymakers to debate what the industry, regulator, and government should be doing to ensure that financial services support well-being for all of us across our life-course.

During the conversation, we referred to our report on dementia and spending, supported by abrdn Financial Fairness Trust, which found that the UK economy could see a boost of around £948 million if we simply made our spending environments more inclusive for those living with dementia and other cognitive impairments.

During a year-long project engaging people living with dementia, carers, and professionals in the finance, retail, transport, and hospitality industries, our report

showcased some of the barriers facing people with dementia as they try to continue doing the things they love.

Our research found that people with dementia often:

- struggle to get to and around shops and buy what they want and need
- find shopping stressful
- are misunderstood or disrespected by staff and other customers
- experience and worry about financial abuse and people taking advantage of them.

We ran a futures workshop and identified a range of opportunities for technology, so we were pleased earlier this month to see the finalists of the Longitude Challenge on Dementia announced and promoted on *The One Show*.

The UKRI-backed Longitude Challenge was set up with a view to identify *"a breakthrough technology that learns from a person living with dementia, adapting and compensating for their condition as it progresses, and enabling them to continue living independently for longer."*

The solutions proposed picked up on some of the ideas we highlighted in our report. We specifically suggested the use of glasses to support people with dementia in interfacing with their environment, so we were pleased to see one of the winners taking on this idea.

There is no doubt that innovation and new technology have roles to play in helping us live better with dementia, and the Longitude Prize will provide much-needed support to test novel ideas and products. But, as we said in our report, we still need to *"overcome the barriers to bringing new products for people with dementia to market. We need to powerfully make the case for the potential of selling new products that work for people with dementia to the wider market, and to overcome entrenched ageist and ableist attitudes among developers and investors."*

The good news is that, as our "Deliveroo dinner" conversation elicited, change is happening. For example, Nationwide has partnered with the charity Dementia UK to make use of its national network of 200 branches to offer specialist dementia clinics and are funding 30 Dementia UK Admiral Nurses to bring specialist health and financial support to the high street.

We are currently working with the Alzheimer's Society on disseminating the findings of the PriDem project on community-based care and support pathways for people living with dementia and their carers. We would be interested in hearing about further examples of initiatives of support for people living with dementia, please email us here.

Young and old, in good health or poor health, online or offline, there are many occasions across our long lives that we're vulnerable to bad actors or simply to making mistakes. The solutions aren't just about utilising high-tech, or about changing laws. In these situations, very often the first thing we need is greater understanding and kindness.

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The Foundry
17 Oval Way
London, SE11 5RR
United Kingdom
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